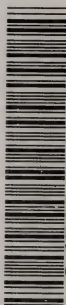


L.F.1
R.

NEW ZEALAND AND OTHER POEMS



3 1761 09427078 2

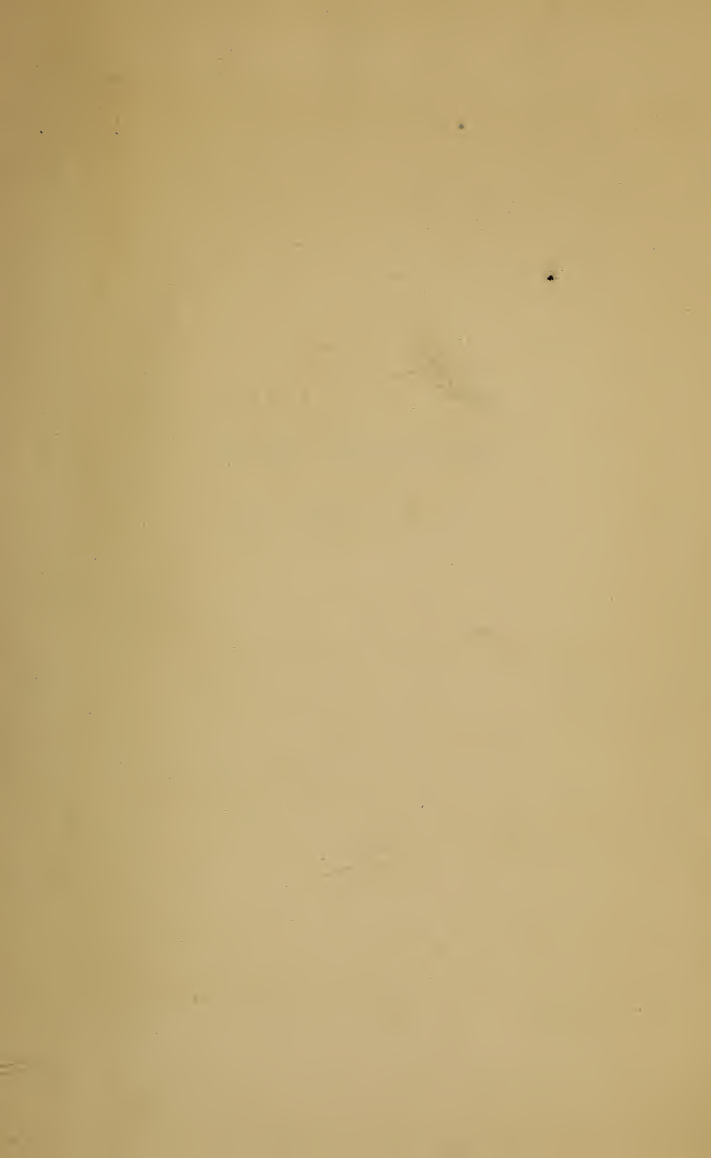
W. P. REEVES

W. P. Reeves

1898



Presented to
The University of Toronto Library
by
Hume Blake, Esq.
from the books of
The late Honourable Edward Blake
Chancellor of the University of Toronto
(1876-1900)



New Zealand

and other Poems

from the writer

NEW ZEALAND

And other Poems

BY

W. P. REEVES

187706
21/2/24

GRANT RICHARDS

9 HENRIETTA STREET

LONDON

1898

Edinburgh : T. and A. CONSTABLE, Printers to Her Majesty

Contents

	PAGE
NEW ZEALAND	I
THE PASSING OF THE FOREST	4
THE DISCOVERY OF THE SOUTHERN ALPS	9
NOX BENIGNA	12
THE TOÉ-TOÉ IN CHURCH	14
A STORM IN THE SOUTHERN OCEAN.—THE ALBATROSS	19
HOKIANGA	23
EGMONT	27
IN PEMBER BAY	28
THE WHITE CONVULVULUS	32
THE BURNT HOMESTEAD	39
THE DUTCH NAVIGATORS AND AUSTRALIA	44
AN AUSTRALIAN NOON	46
IN THE INDIAN OCEAN	52
THE RIVERS OF DAMASCUS	54
OFF THE AZORES	58

Contents

	PAGE
CARTAGENA OF THE INDIES	60
PASTORAL	61
AN OLD AMBASSADOR'S PETS	63
A DREAM	71
GORDON AT KHARTOUM	74
THE DISAPPOINTED SWAGGER	75
A CONFESSION OF CRICKET	80
A LAY OF LEGISLATION	84
A DESERTED SCHOOL BATHING-PLACE	91
THE OLD COLLEGE BOY	96

New Zealand

(1893)

God girt her about with the surges
And winds of the masterless deep,
Whose tumult uprouses and urges
Quick billows to sparkle and leap.
He filled from the life of their motion
Her nostrils with breath of the sea,
And gave her afar in the ocean
A citadel free.

Her never the fever-mist shrouding,
Nor drought of the desert may blight,
Nor pall of dun smoke overclouding
Vast cities of clamour and night.

New Zealand

But the voice of abundance of waters,
In valleys that bright rivers lave,
Greets her children, the sons and the daughters
Of sunshine and wave.

Lo ! here where each league hath its fountains
In isles of deep fern and tall pine,
And breezes snow-cooled on the mountains,
Or keen from the limitless brine,
See men to the battlefield pressing
To conquer one foe—the stern soil,
Their kingship in labour expressing,
Their lordship in toil.

Though young they are heirs of the ages,
Though few they are freemen and peers,
Plain workers—yet sure of the wages
Slow Destiny pays with the years.
Though least they and latest their nation,
Yet this they have won without sword,

New Zealand

That Woman with Man shall have station,
And Labour be lord.

The winds of the sea and high heaven
Speed pure to her kissed by the foam.
The steeds of her ocean undriven,
Unbitted and riderless roam,
And clear from her lamp newly lighted
Shall stream o'er the billows upcurled
A light as of wrongs at length righted,
Of Hope to the world.

The Passing of the Forest

ALL cannot fade that glorifies the hills,
Their strength remains, their aspect of command,
Their flush of colour when calm evening stills
Day's clamour, and the sea-breeze cools the land.
With shout of thunder and with voice of rills,
Ancient of days in green old age they stand
In grandeur that can never know decay,
Though from their flanks men strip the woods away.

But thin their vesture now—the restless grass,
Bending and dancing as the breeze goes by,
Catching quick gleams and cloudy shades that pass,
As shallow seas reflect a wind-stirred sky.
Ah ! nobler far their forest raiment was
From crown to feet that clothed them royally,

The Passing of the Forest

Shielding their mysteries from the glare of day,
Ere the dark woods were reft and torn away.

Well may these plundered and insulted kings,
Stripped of their robes, despoiled, uncloaked, dis-
crowned,
Draw down the clouds with white enfolding wings,
And soft aërial fleece to wrap them round,
To hide the scars that every season brings,
The fire's black smirch, the landslip's gaping
wound ;
Well may they shroud their heads in mantle gray,
Since from their brows the leaves were plucked
away !

Gone is the forest world, its wealth of life,
Its jostling, crowding, thrusting, struggling race,
Creeper with creeper, bush with bush at strife,
Warring and wrestling for a breathing space ;
Below, a realm with tangled rankness rife,
Aloft, tree columns, shafts of stateliest grace.

The Passing of the Forest

Gone is the forest nation. None might stay ;
Giant and dwarf alike have passed away.

Gone are the forest birds, arboreal things,
Eaters of honey, honey-sweet of song,
The tui, and the bell-bird,—he who sings
That brief, rich music we would fain prolong.
Gone the wood-pigeon's sudden whirr of wings ;
The daring robin, all unused to wrong.
Wild, harmless, hamadryad creatures, they
Lived with their trees, and died, and passed away.

And with the birds the flowers, too, are gone
That bloomed aloft, ethereal, stars of light,
The clematis, the kowhai like ripe corn,
Russet, though all the hills in green were
dight ;

The rata, draining from its tree forlorn
Rich life-blood for its crimson blossoms bright,
Red glory of the gorges—well-a-day !
Fled is that splendour, dead and passed away.

The Passing of the Forest

Gone are the forest tracks, where oft we rode
Under the silver fern-fronds climbing slow,
In cool, green tunnels, though fierce noontide
glowed

And glittered on the tree-tops far below.
There, mid the stillness of the mountain road,
We just could hear the valley river flow,
Whose voice through many a windless summer day
Haunted the silent woods, now passed away.

Drinking fresh odours, spicy wafts that blew,
We watched the glassy, quivering air asleep,
Midway between tall cliffs that taller grew
Above the unseen torrent calling deep ;
Till, like a sword, cleaving the foliage through,
The waterfall flashed foaming down the steep :
White, living water, cooling with its spray
Dense plumes of fragile fern, now scorched away.

Mighty are axe and fire, destroyers twain,
Swift servants of the arch-destroyer, Man ;

The Passing of the Forest

And he is mighty as he hews amain,

Bronzed pioneer of nations. Ay, but scan

The ruined wonder never wrought again,

The ravaged beauty God alone could plan !

Bitter the thought : 'Is this the price we pay—

The price for progress—beauty swept away ?'

The Discovery of the Southern Alps

(*From 'Tasman, a poem.'*)

THE strong south wind had almost died away
And pleasant and unclouded came the day.
The clear sea sparkled and with glint of gold
In endless, easy undulations rolled.
Sweet was the morning air, and shrill the cry
Of fearless sea-birds floating, wheeling nigh.
But see ! ahead, like bow gigantic laid
Across the East, against the dawn displayed,
Crest above crest, mass overpeering mass,
Rose shadowy walls forbidding us to pass.
Strange, phantom ranges, vaporous and wan,
High in the air above our pathway ran,

The Discovery of the Southern Alps

White-skirted, ghostly, from the deep upborne,
A throne unto the Angel of the Morn,
Whose robe of shining light had girdle red,
Whose shoon were flaming gold, and overhead
His pinions vast, clear green and amber, grew,
Filling the Heaven, to a radiant blue.

Onward we glided marvelling : we scanned
The white foam leaping on the tawny strand.
We caught the everlasting undertone,
And through the mist of spray in mid air thrown,
Dim and green-mantled in their cloak of wood,
Marked the bold foot-hills how erect they stood,
Yet dwarfs, mere ant-heaps showing ; for, be-
yond,
With edges cut as keen as diamond,
True mountains rose in cold disdain, and lo !
From many a summit shone eternal snow
A royal crown and ancient, whitest rime
And frost of unimaginable time.

The Discovery of the Southern Alps

High battlement o'er battlement did gleam,
Guarding the way to—what? We could but
dream.

Bathed in the sunlight fair they seemed to sleep
The slumber of the mighty, tranquil, deep,
Between the calm sky and the quiet wave,
And tempest past and tempest soon to rave.
And here and there these Titans carelessly
Had thrust down monstrous limbs to spurn the sea,
While, southward far, yet mightier Alps were fain
To wade knee-deep like giants in the main.

Nox Benigna

How kind is night
After the fierceness of the summer day,
That glared so long on yellow grass and gray
And earth-cracks parted as parched lips that pray
For water bright !

How wide the calm !
The endless, fading plain how white and still,
How black the pines against the moonlit hill,
How loud has grown the little thread of rill
Beside yon palm !

Beneath the range
Deep shadows lurk behind a silver screen
In thick, hot air, the clustering trunks between.
The wild-bird's note within the dark ravine
Calls clear and strange.

Nox Benigna

The wind awakes,
And over distant mountains grassy, dry,
Blown by its breath the red fires leap and fly,
Or, climbing backward, slowly creep on high,
Thin golden snakes.

Now ceases pain.
The myriad brittle straws that make life's sheaf,
The needle-pricks more hard to bear than grief,
Are gone as dust is washed from off the leaf
When comes the rain.

The Toé-toé¹ in Church

CAPTIVE from the wilderness,
Withering in dumb distress,
Tribute torn from margins green,
Weary, listless valley queen,
Shut from Summer's life and stir,
Bound, a golden prisoner,
Toé-toé, fay forlorn,
Droop thou must this sultry morn.
Dainty gypsy, dancer light,
Sad thy fortune, drear thy plight,
Stripped of thy sweet woodland state
This dull fane to decorate.

Piteous thy case : ah ! where
Stay the maids, thy sisters fair ?

¹ *Arundo conspicua*, closely resembling the Pampas Grass.

The Toé-Toé in Church

Linger they to mourn thy fate
Near some stream inviolate,
By green-mantled cliffs the head
Of still vales unvisited ?
There for tresses reft away
They, methinks, must sigh to-day,
While the giant grasses dip,
Kissing quick the water's lip,
Where the fantail's quaint advance
Zigzags on in airy dance ;
Where the dragon-fly at noon
Loiters o'er the brown lagoon,
And the pine's sharp, spicy scent
With strange odours wild is blent,
And tall ferns, with bending wings,
Listen while the tui sings.

Laughing beauty of the hills,
Lady-love of winds and rills,
Ensign of the hidden streams,
Tossed by breezes, lit by gleams,

The Toé-Toé in Church

Thee in duress I behold
Like some prisoned nun of old,
Virgin-tribute hurried hither,
In the house of God to wither.

Golden-pluméd Amazon,
Are thy captains dead and gone?—
Henchmen ranged in mimic rank,
Green militia of thy bank.
Where are now the trusty swords
Round thee held by valiant lords,
Shaking blades of stiffest flax?
While, to hedge thee 'gainst attacks,
Bulrush pikemen massed below,
Knee-deep in the oozy flow,
Bristling fiercely, scorning fears,
Raised their velvet-guarded spears.
Are thy rustic warriors fled,
All thy champions captive led?

Princess haled in bonds from far,
What to thee are creeds that jar?

The Toé-Toé in Church

Maiden of the shining hair,
Tell me who thy gallants were ?
Many were thy loves, one guesses,
Damsel of the gleaming tresses.
Did convolvulus all pale
Ring thee round with tendrils frail,
Girdle thee with flowers light,
Blush with love and blanch with fright ?
Thee did subject waters greet
Hopeless, far beneath thy feet ?
Did the koromiko strew
Blossoms of white and purple too ?
Or did some pert vagrant bird,
Spying thee by breezes stirred,
Flutter down to dance with thee,
Piping shrill triumphant glee ?

Past is all thy woodland mirth ;
Faint, remote, the song of earth ;
Pale the lustre of thy hair,
Fading princess fettered there,

The Toé-Toé in Church

Bright Andromeda on high,
Manacled, condemned to die,
Pitied not by sound divines,
Or these worthy Philistines.
Yet as wafts of coolness blow
From steep ancient alps of snow
Into vales that gasping lie
Mute beneath a brazen sky :
So, like breath of freshness free,
Speeds the fancy stirred by thee,
And, sad beauty as thou art,
Thanks be thine from one man's heart.

A Storm in the Southern Ocean.—The Albatross

(*From 'Tasman, a poem.'*)

DARK was the sea, and hard and dark the sky,
As day by day the south-west wind blew high,
Pressing us ever to the unknown East
With stress unsparing, force that never ceased,
But with its chill, rough breath as on we tossed
Giving us back the vigour we had lost
By warm lagoons, and blue and silver seas,
Green Java's palms and tepid Celebes.
Not now through flashing fields of sapphire slipping,
Or in soft, oily undulations dipping,
Loitered our ships ; nor on a dancing sea
Stirred by the merry trade-wind's pipe danced we,

A Storm in the Southern Ocean

But plunged and climbed and toiled and rolled o'er
surges,

Masses the cold Antarctic storm-wind urges,
Driving them fiercely from his icy fastness,
Piling them up to wondrous might and vastness,
And scattering their crests in smoke far blown,
Till to a height and bulk terrific grown
They towered o'er our stern through storm and night,
Balefully gleaming slopes of frothing white.

Oft our good timbers fairly groaned aloud
As the keen night-wind wailed through sheet and
shroud,

And the hull battered by a billow's strength
Staggered and shivered throughout all its length,
As shakes an island of the Indian seas
When earthquake shudders through her forest trees.
Oft on the steep wet deck, to shroud or pin
Lashed, amid cutting spray and howling din,
On watch for weary hours, I marked the gale,
As through night's murk and scud the foam-crests pale

A Storm in the Southern Ocean

Flashed for an instant in our lantern's beams,
Or deep and boiling troughs engulfed the gleams.

Yet through the turmoil comfortless and loud,
Welter and yeast of sea-wash, gust and cloud,
The clamour, yet monotony of storm,
One shape disdainful, gravely-speeding form
Was ever tranquil on the tempest's wing—
The albatross, the Southern Ocean's king,
Whose billow-shaken, wind-tormented throne
Looks from the portals of the White Unknown
Out o'er the salt, earth-girdling waste ; whose flight
Is beauty's self, so grace and strength unite.
See the great bird with easy, gliding sweep,
Outstrip the swiftest sailer of the deep !
Or 'gainst the gale with few slow beats prevailing
And power not half expended yet availing !
Or balancing on moveless pinions there
He floats as calmly on the frantic air
As white swan dreaming by a river-nest,—
Yea, takes upon the storm-wind's back his rest

A Storm in the Southern Ocean

With wide-extended steadfast wings displayed
Curved with the cruel grace of Eastern blade.
Then glancing sidelong o'er the wave-tops shows
Full rounded breast and spread of wings—their snows
And all their ample span—and seems to graze
Yet brushes not the hissing, flying sprays,
Spirit of speed aërial ! Now he dips
Into wild pits of death his pinion-tips,
Then upward veers, captures the wind's whole might,
And rushing with the tempest seeks the night.

Hokianga

THOUGH travellers' praises her beauties acclaim
In phrases full skilfully drest,
A truce to their prosing, their rhapsodies tame,—
Go, see Hokianga at rest !

Go, mark the calm sweep of her tide's ebb and flow ;
Recall her tumultuous past ;
And own that our country has lingered to show
This sweetest of scenes as the last.

I saw her green waters asleep at high noon,
Enchanted to silence and rest ;
I saw her white wavelets flash back to the moon,
And die on Omápere's breast.

Hokianga

Then long ocean beaches, where serpents of spray
Sped up as we rode the wet strand,
And coiled round the hoofs of our horses in play,
And hissed at each print on the sand.

But the scene from the pass was the fairest. Amazed
We paused, for the winds lay asleep,
And halting drew bridle in silence, and gazed
On the infinite plain of the deep.

There screened in a twilight of whispering fern
We saw, through the fronds looking forth,
No weltering sea of the South, cold and stern,
But the brilliance and glow of the North.

Foam-flecked over sapphire and purple they lay,
Peace, splendour, and colour—all fair,
Far fading to lilac and delicate gray,
Under shining abysses of air.

Hokianga

And out o'er the luminous, heaving expanse,
Sailed fancy adventuring, fain
Of the tremulous peaks of dim isles of romance,
Surf-guarded, palm-girt in the main.

While the voice of the surges uplifted on high,
Or lulling in gradual fall,
Cast, stealing and sinking as cadences die,
A mantle of slumber on all.

So leave the trite pictures dull travellers paint.
Ride northward, good friend, on thy quest,
And witness how palely this eulogy faint
Shows wild Hokianga at rest.

Egmont

ELSEWHERE the mountains have their peers, or stand
Ringed and beset with hedge and press of hills ;
But, peerless and superb, great Egmont wills
To dwell apart beside the western strand.
The sweeping outlines of his towering cone
Curve from the shore itself, and steadfast, grave,
Above the shifting, ever-changing wave,
The solitary Titan watches, lone,
Moveless, majestic. There, at fall of night,
Wrapped in his sombre forest drapery,
The giant, gazing down with fixed sight,
Eyes the half-vanished sun, slow, loth to flee,
Quenching its vast and crimson-gleaming light,
Drowned in the foam-drift of the Tasman Sea.

In Pember Bay

Papaitonga Lake¹

SAFE from the mountain tempest's wild alarms,
Safe from the driving sea-wind's bitter spray,
Placid, enfolded in the forest's arms,
Lies Pember Bay.

Did some brown lover in his fancy's youth,
Name thee in accents musically slow,
Soft Papaitonga, 'Beauty of the South,'
Called long ago?

Midway between the mountains and the deep,
Secure from upland cold, from salt winds keen,
Bathed in sweet air and sunshine, thou dost keep
A golden mean.

¹ See Note on p. 30.

In Pember Bay

Dark clouds may brood on yonder peaks and spurs,
Chill winds may chase the sea-foam flake on
flake,
But here is peace. Nought ruffles, nothing stirs
The tranquil lake.

Nought shakes the ferns, whose interlacing fronds,
Like sea-birds' wings, uplift their giant pinions.
Nought stirs the brakes, whose creepers' myriad
bonds
Guard green dominions.

Look, while the sunset clings to yonder range,
Look, while the lake gleams silver in its ray,
And pray that though all beauty else may change,
This scene may stay.

Here the wild birds, from ancient coverts pressed,
May seek asylum by this silent mere ;
And though no other glade or wave give rest,
May find it here.

In Pember Bay

Though in an hour the forest fire ends all
That nature can in patient ages build,
Though thro' the land the straight tall trees must fall,
The birds be stilled,

Yet in this sacred wood no axe shall ring,
These winding shores shall sanctuary give,
Where in cool thickets happy birds may sing,
And verdure live.

Long, Papaitonga, may thy ferns grow fair,
Thy graceful toé-toé droop and sway,
And never tree or bird know scathe or scare
By Pember Bay.

NOTE.—The *New Zealand Graphic* contained the following interesting sketch :—

'It will be welcome news to all lovers of New Zealand that the Government has issued instructions to the various Commissioners of Crown Lands throughout the Colony to reserve from sale in future all the choicest scenery, the sites of ancient pas and fortifications, and other places of public interest. Some of our colonists also begin to realise the necessity for this. A case in point is Sir Walter Buller's beautiful country home in the South. This spot is thus described in the last

In Pember Bay

volume of the *Transactions of the New Zealand Institute* (vol. xxvi. p. 572) :—"Sixty miles from Wellington by the Manawatu railway, and less than two miles to the westward of that line, there is one of the prettiest bits of natural scenery in New Zealand. This is Papaitonga, so called from time immemorial, the name signifying 'the beauty of the South.' It is a lake of 125 acres in extent, with two exquisite islets covered with bright vegetation. On the north and north-east sides it is enclosed by a beautiful native forest, which presents a thick fringe of tree-ferns and underwood along the water's edge ; on the southern side there is open rising ground, with clearings in the forest beyond, showing the snow-covered ranges of the Tararua Mountains ; whilst on the low-lying flat to the westward there is an outlet to the sea, about three miles distant, by the Waiwiri stream. Every part of it is historic ground, Papaitonga having been the scene of one of the most important of ancient Maori fights, and the little island which has given its name to the lake the principal battle-ground. To this day the island is a perfect necropolis of human bones, although concealed and protected by the dense growth of evergreen vegetation that now covers the site of the ancient pa. The original possessors of this picturesque lake—the Muaupoko—after being vanquished by Te Rauparaha and his armed followers, were driven out of the district, but a remnant was afterwards permitted to come back and settle at Horowhenua, a little further to the north, which is still the home of the tribe."

'The Papaitonga Lake is the home and breeding-place of numberless waterfowl. Sir Waller Buller brought out with him from England white swans, Egyptian and barnacle geese, Iceland sheld-ducks, mallards, and other birds, and these are all now fairly established there. But besides the imported birds, the lake teems with native wild-duck and teal of various kinds. Not a shot is allowed to be fired on these placid waters, and the ducks breed among the raupo sedges in perfect security.'

The White Convolvulus

THE one grey spire of the scattered town
On an ocean of rolling green looked down,
Billowy masses of verdure fair,
Motionless all in the windless air.

Rising and sinking in dip and crest,
But never a motion, all at rest ;
As though some wizard with strange decree,
Had said, ' Be still,' to a spell-bound sea.

Over the leafy wave-tops high,
In the fresh, sweet air of the morning sky,
Sole speck of black in the shining day,
One hawk was winging his lazy way.

Dark as a reef by the ebb-tide stript
Rose into masses the eucalypt.

The White Convolvulus

Laburnums nigh with the ringlets bold
Dangled their lanterns of shaking gold.

Piercing the leaves in its morning flight,
Filling the flood with a dusky light,
The sunshine fell on a river clear,
Flashing and vanishing far and near.

The rain-washed sky was a shield of blue,
The flowers ungathered, the long grass new,
Everywhere vigour and sap were rife,
Full of the heat and the wine of life.

Ranges on ranges, far crest on crest,
The long Alp-barriers closed the West,
Like the walls of the Median city old,
A guardian girdle sevenfold.

There grimmest ridges looked softer through
The clinging film of their gentle blue,
Where high in the haze of the summits show
The cool, faint streaks of belated snow.

The White Convolvulus

And all, from the mountain, the great plain o'er,
To the sickle-blade of the curving shore,
From earth below to the heaven's height,
Was pierced and filled with the living light.

Many and many a flower maid,
For her tender beauty half afraid,
Loosed for the Lord of the Day her zone,
Seen by the wandering wind alone.

The fragile lilac, alas ! was fled
With the delicate breath of the springtide dead,
Swift as a vision of vanished youth,
Briefest and fleetest, a dream of ruth.

But the ruddy may in the hedges grew,
The satin wings of the white flag flew,
And the dandelion's orange clots
Were stars in a thousand wastrel plots.

The rose's poetry, poppy's prose,
The braggart peony's wrathful rows

The White Convolvulus

By the dainty pink and the pansy stood,
Where iris flaunted her purple hood,

Beautiful all. But we passed them thus,
Passed to a snowy convolvulus
White in the air o'er the water's flow,
Shadowy, wan in the wave below.

Goblet ethereal swaying clear,
Pale as the stars on a midnight mere,
Thinner than shells that in ocean lie
Or pinion carven of ivory.

Cup of aërial beauty made,
Touched by no tarnish of earth it swayed,
And as it answered the air's light breath,
An image waved in the stream beneath.

As the milk-white flower from side to side
Swung like a bell o'er the cool green tide,
Leaning and dreaming we listened low
For clear bell-music anigh the flow.

The White Convolvulus

Poets there be who have ears to hear
The star's high music 'twixt sphere and sphere.
Lovers there be who in golden hours
May know the voices of earth's frail flowers.

Lovers twain we were happy there
In a glory neither of earth nor air,
And each through the other's soul could well
The music catch of the fairy bell.

Faint as the sough of a desert tree
When a slow wind stirs it carelessly,
Light as the murmur of dancing flame
Its voice in the hush of the morning came :—

‘I am a daughter of air and light,
Of bird and willow the playmate white,
Fed on the fire of our god the sun,
Not by desire of a mortal won.

‘Withering, dying at mortal touch,
I fade away in the spoiler's clutch,

The White Convolvulus

Never in prison to droop my span,
In the heavy air of the house of man.

‘ But here I nod to the drowsy wind,
In a tremulous hammock of tendrils twined,
Eyeing my friends on their journey by,
The honey-sucker and dragon-fly.

‘ Watching them ruffle the glassy floor
Of the long, green, arching corridor,
Whose whispering willows dip and rise,
Cutting the stream as the current flies.

‘ In the dim sweet water-world are seen
Mazes of streaming and shifting green,
And deeper, dreaming beyond, a few
Silvery clouds in the bowl of blue.

‘ And there I gaze at the spectral sky,
The ghost of the rocking sphere on high,
Till touched by twilight my flower is furled,
And my shadow steals from the water-world.

The White Convolvulus

‘I must be free as the wildest thing,
In the leafy tangle to curl and cling,
Free to laugh in the beams of day,
Free on the blast to be borne away.

‘Not waiting sadly to die a-cold,
My petals trampled in rotting mould,
But rapt and lost when my life is past
In the shining spaces of air at last.’

The Burnt Homestead

(Heathstock¹ loquitur)

WHERE beams half burned and rafters mix,
With tumbled heaps of blackened bricks,

A hapless show :

Where not a blade of kindly grass,
Or e'en a weed to grace the mass,

As yet may grow ;

Where under interlacing trees,
Fat hares may shamble at their ease,

Nor fear the cook ;

Where clumsy kakas perching nigh
No longer risk becoming pie,—

My site was. Look !

¹ This typical homestead of old Canterbury (a description of which may be found in Lady Barker's *Station Life in New Zealand*) was burnt to the ground in February 1889.

The Burnt Homestead

My master built me. Daring man,
Alone he drew the wondrous plan,
With dauntless soul.

My bricks he baked, my timbers laid,
With never a contractor's aid,
And reared the whole.

Dull architects despised my birth,
Base builders shook their sides with mirth,
E'en friends had fears ;
Yet, spite of prophesying sneer,
I lived to bid you welcome here
For thirty years.

No dry north-wester made me shrink,
No wet south-wester found a chink
To flood my halls,
Though rats in many a midnight raid
My creepers into ladders made
To scale the walls.

The Burnt Homestead

Nor did I fear to brave the breeze
When first, unsheltered by my trees,
 I felt its might,
But, whether from the South or North,
I stood erect and faced its wrath,
 Proud of my height.

Ah ! jolly days and nights have been,
And pleasant faces have I seen
 Around *such* fires.
Here half the night old friends have sat,
And heard that flow of cheery chat
 A pipe inspires.

How good it was ! An equal dower
Of freshness and of staying power
 Those yarns revealed.
What tales of tigers, Sepoys, Sikhs,
What memories of narrow squeaks
 By flood and field !

The Burnt Homestead

A settler's talk of early days,
A traveller's of Eastern ways
Or Breton habits ;
Here tales of Himalayan stags,
There scattered hints on driving drags
And quelling rabbits.

Reflections on merino ewes
Were blent with philosophic views
Of wealth and worry,
The farmers' very latest pest,
A cunning recipé, the best
By far for curry.

So while two stories were the most
Of stature I could ever boast,
I stood this proof,
No friend e'er sought in vain a place,
No guest turned back for lack of space
Under my roof.

The Burnt Homestead

Nor lingered I for tottering age
To lag, past service, on the stage,
 But, in a night,
Wrapped in a royal robe of fire,
Myself my own bright funeral pyre,
 Took gallant flight.

True to the last I held my post
Till maid and mistress, guest and host,
 Were safely gone.
Like warrior charged the foe to check,
Or captain on a sinking deck,
 I battled on.

Till all they treasured, carried out,
Lay piled upon the sward about,
 I would not die ;
Then, when the final moment came,
They saw, upraised, my arms of flame
 Wave them Good-bye.

The Dutch Navigators and Australia

(*From 'Tasman, a poem.'*)

SOUTHWARD and eastward had our seamen steered
And borne back tales of lands wide, arid, weird.
League upon league their patient ships had won,
Yet southward aye the wilderness stretched on
Lonely and dead as by enchantment doomed.
Oft through the haze dim yellow headlands loomed
Fronting the deep with quaint and monstrous shapes,
Fantastic bulwarks, man-like, bird-like capes.
Seldom the sound of streams awoke the strand,
For God's good rain had half forgot the land.
Only the loud cicala, tireless, shrill,
Jarred 'mid the leaves on every sunburnt hill ;

The Dutch Navigators and Australia

And beasts grotesquely leaping, harmless, shy,
Fled at a voice or blundered careless by ;
And, buzzing, ceaseless plague to ears and eyes,
Came, myriad-torment, countless swarms of flies.
So when in need of water or of wood
Our sailors on the silent beaches stood,
And at their feet the hot sand glowed and gleamed,
And o'er their heads the changeless heaven dreamed,
Awestruck they swore the solemn shore was cursed,
Bound by dread spells of silence, heat, and thirst.
Nor found they sign in cave, on rock or hill,
Of craft of man or kindly human skill,
Save certain booths they chanced on by the shore—
Stakes slanted, boughs set endwise, nothing more,
Half a babe's castle, half a wild brute's lair,
Rude, childish, pitiful : and lurking there,
Beyond the trees, gaunt stealthy forms sped far,
And long, strange cries seemed shouts of fear and war.

An Australian Noon

(Christmas Day)

BENEATH the vast and tranquil sky
The South Pacific surges die.
The pride and anger of the sea
Are broken here, and restfully,
Against the Continent, the deep
Lies like a strong man in his sleep.

Not water this, but thick as milk,
Or sheets of soft, grey, wrinkled silk,
Where over every fold and crease
The noonday broods with wings of peace.
Out eastward on the plain immense
The haze grows gradually dense,
But the eye pierces mile on mile
Beyond yon solitary isle
To where, misshapen, incomplete,

An Australian Noon

Dim visions bred of mist and heat,
Vague headlands, spectral mountains, stand,
The coast-line of an airy land,
Leaving the cloud-bewildered eye
Lost in a maze, half sea half sky,
And bringing back afresh for me
The ancient mystery of the sea,
Enchanted islands beckoning on,
White waves no ship e'er sailed upon,
Calling and luring, cruel, cold,
The self-same magic as of old
When all was wonderment and guess
In the ocean's awful endlessness.
Under the tall cape's arching side
The weary waters fain would hide,
And move and murmur round its feet
To shun the grim, unsparing heat.
There yellow hollows are cooled and kissed
By the dreamy swell of amethyst,
And there are caverns everywhere,
Deep, too deep for noonday's stare,

An Australian Noon

And waving branches of swaying weed,
A woven curtain of lace and brede,
Where the sea-wave softens the light to green,
And never the torturing noon hath been.

But let the fierce sun stab at will,
The sweltering water murmur still :
The blazing strand lies far beneath,
And we aloft draw freer breath
Above the hillsides tanned with drought,
Above the bush-fire burning out,
Within a scarred and blasted ring,
Above the maize-fields, green as spring
In vales yet moist where water speeds,
Brown water hid in giant reeds,
—A thousand feet up, gazing down
From the table-top with the forest-crown,
—A thousand feet up where the breeze
Is almost cool amid the trees,—
Here resting we the view command
Of oven-valley, furnace strand,

An Australian Noon

And drink the air in gusts and whiffs
That eddies round about the cliffs ;
These cliffs where dawn's white mist-wreath lags,
When sea-born sunrise smites the crags,
And cloudy wisps as the breeze awakes,
Upcurling bend like startled snakes ;
Or, as a sail storm-rent, so they
Are torn and flutter fast away.
But now 'tis midday. Mists are fled,
No fleece or fleck stays overhead,
Though strange and wan in noontide's blaze
Thin, vaporous, the half-moon strays,
Intrusive, pale, for day unmeet
As a ghost in a staring city-street.

Here, in the ample, cool veranda,
The faintest gusts of the sea-breeze wander,
Just strong enough to stir the hair
Of the sleeper in the hammock there,
Lying with listless arm, and head
Half hidden by a book unread.

An Australian Noon

Do you recall the hammock-song
Poor Mavis sang the stream along,
That holiday of vanished spring ?
She 'll sing no more on earth, poor thing !
But here it is :—

Sweet in the open air is sleep,
When forest-birds in the thickets keep,
And boats rock slow on the burning deep.

Or it is pleasant to wake, and swing
'Mid hum of the insects murmuring,
And the harsh cicala's ceaseless ring :

When sheep are huddled in scanty shade
Of trees whose leaves like a dagger-blade
Turn mocking edges of little aid.

The crack of a seed-pod strikes the ear ;
A single bird-note brief and clear ;
The fall of a leaf ere autumn sere.

An Australian Noon

And silver Pampas grasses sway,
As serpents do when charmers play
Tranced by a droning Indian lay.

The stately fig-tree spreads her tent,
And keen magnolia fumes are blent
With heavy oleander scent.

Scarce do the fronds of the tree-fern move,
Or plumes of the palm-tree stir above,
Alike they wait for the wind they love.

In the warm, dry, fragrant air you stay,
Watching the light with the shade at play,
In the borderland of the dreams of day,

Till you hear the voice of the tides that creep
Where a cloudy castle rears its keep
Above the tides of the sea of sleep.

In the Indian Ocean

(From 'Tasman, a poem.')

So putting forth from Java, leisurely
We slipped across a silken, placid sea,
Smooth, heaving gently in its tropic sleep,
Deep blue—so richly, so intensely deep,
That, cut asunder by our plunging stems,
It glowed as luminous translucent gems
Might glow light-smitten, lifting round each prow
Clear walls of ^{crystal} ~~luminous~~ radiance capped with snow.
Empty it was, that lovely, lifeless sea.
Utterly lone 'twixt wave and sky sailed we
Over the water-desert, endless, bright,
Liquid transparence glorified with light,
Sapphire that made the stainless dome look pale.
At whiles the flying-fish their fitful trail

In the Indian Ocean

Scrawled, dripping on the limpid hyaline,
Skimming—a silver flash—the tranquil brine ;
Or some brave, slender bird, far-roving, fast,
Fleeted o'erhead to vanish in the vast ;
Or some majestic, high-piled mass of cloud,
White as the canvas of Armada proud,
Would slowly march across the shining day,
Darkening the sea to violet and gray,
And sting the shadowed deep with hissing rain.

So held we Southward o'er the Indian main,
And steering ever slantwise to the West,
Felt on our cheeks that gale of gales most blest,
The trade-wind, friend of man. Then instantly
The glad waves tossed their heads and danced in glee,
And all once more was speed and stir and motion,
Awakened radiant life in air and ocean,
And swift forgetfulness of weary heat.
Around us leaped the wave-tops, bright and fleet,
Around us spray-bows glittered, spin-drift flew,
As the blest South wind fresh and fresher blew.

The Rivers of Damascus

‘ Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel ? ’

ROUND the dry plain the brown hills rise,
Midmost the plain the city lies,
Ancient Damascus, sovran there,
Encamped in leagues of gardens fair,
The cincture green that round her clung
Old when the pride of Tyre was young,
Girdle of verdure deep and wide,
Where ever-living waters glide,
Where feeding full all things that grow
The rivers of Damascus flow.

In flight beneath the Syrian sun
To sheltering aisles of shade they run,
Stealing within to lose the sky
In long cool halls of greenery,
To whisper soft as windless rain,

The Rivers of Damascus

To flash and 'scape the eye again.
They sparkle here, they ripple there,
Unseen they murmur everywhere,
And dimpling, coiling, laughing low,
The rivers of Damascus flow.

By many a cypress dark and high
Sweet rills meander leisurely ;
Asunder cleft, apart they wind,
Bright tangled silver disentwined ;
Here blinds and burns the sunlight's sheen,
There linger pools in twilight green,
Or gushing forth to sudden light,
Encompass citron orchards white,
Where petals strewn are flakes of snow
And rivers of Damascus flow.

Without, the sun's unpitying thrust
Strikes on the yellow desert dust,
The cricket's note whirs hard and shrill,
The red rocks glow that gird the hill.

The Rivers of Damascus

Not yet the sun hath sunk upon
The battlements of Lebanon.
Within, are musing rest and dreams
In sight of waters, sound of streams,
Where blossoming pomegranates blow
And rivers of Damascus flow.

The desert riders fainting scan
The weary West—'tis Ramazan ;
Their horses' hoofs 'mid stillness ring
As some hot stone aside they fling ;
But here the pleasant waters creep,
Their freight indifference and sleep,
Singing of cities, ruined, gone,
Great Baalbec and Babylon.
Old is their song the leaves below
Where rivers of Damascus flow.

Hushed is the courtyard, dead the street,
The high walls gleam in dazzling heat,
Only a murmur floats afar

The Rivers of Damascus

Around the fragrant, strange bazaar.
And flickering lights through palm-leaves fly
O'er shrouded Moslem pacing by,
And slumbrous fountains bubble on,
And drowsy hours slip one by one,
And Sleep's dusk pinions waver slow,
And rivers of Damascus flow.

The shadow of grey centuries
Over the still, white city lies ;
Far, visionary ages brood
In grave, enfolding quietude ;
The listless, wise, impassive East
Smiles like some old world-weary priest,
Smiles at ambition, effort, strife,
And all our petty, fever'd life,
A haunting smile on face bent low
Where rivers of Damascus flow.

Off the Azores

SLOWLY the dying day
 Passes in peace,
Loud wind and hissing spray
 Slacken and cease.
Daylight's unresting three,
Wind, sun, and leaping sea,
Failing, relenting, ye
 Grant us release.

Night-wind from stern to prow
 Faint is thy flight.
Fallen thine anger now,
 Ended the fight,
Nought stirs or murmurs save
Plash of some weary wave
Gliding to seek a grave
 Far in the night.

Off the Azores

Swayed by the lifting tide,
 Couched in a boat,
Wrapped in the twilight wide,—
 Lo ! as I float,
Star follows herald star,
White lamp from lamp afar ;
Scattered and rare they are,
 Pale and remote.

Listen ! A sailor sings,
 Deep from his chest,
Gallant and clear it rings,
 Then all is rest.
Slave of the wanton sea,
Sport of her bitter glee,
Serf for a moment free,
 He, too, is blest.

To Cartagena

(From the French of J. de Heredia.)

SAD city, ancient sovereign of the seas,
Now unpursued, the shark may seek his prey,
And only fleeting shadows float to-day
On waves where giant galleons rocked at ease.

From Drake's rough hand, his rovers wild and stark,
Thy shattered blackened ramparts crumble yet,
And, sombre pearls in glorious circle set,
Gape the grim muzzles of thy cannon dark.

Between wide skies that burn, white seas that foam,
'Neath sleeping noonday's weary sultry dome,
Dream, lady, of thy proud Conquistadors.

Or lulled by sighing, swaying leaves of palm,
Brooding o'er glories vanished from thy shores,
Rest in thy tropic night of languid calm.

Pastoral

PIPE, shepherd, melody
Faint, sweet, and quaint, of noise afraid,
To wander with the breeze around the glade,
And, let the sounding, falling surge,
Gleaming beyond the forest's utmost verge,
Not yet in silence die.

Through leaves let music steal :
For fierce the day and lords it long,
And brief e'er brooding sleep our evensong.
But soon the night of coolness fain,
Sighing amid the trees like summer rain,
Shall all day's anguish heal.

Pastoral

On land the shadows fall.

To float upon thy waves, the sky
Paling to depth of pearl for canopy,

To rest upon thy breast, O sea,
Beyond the headland of the lonely tree
Thy voices call—they call.

An Old Ambassador's Pets

‘No, you have never come this way before,
Nor have you ever passed the little door
In yonder arch half hidden in a bower
Of jessamine and purple passion-flower.
Well, few have. And I fancy, truth to state,
Most of our friends would scarce appreciate
The honour, Frank, I now bestow on you.
They think—I let them—that the roof we view
Catching the sunset, covers with its glass
Rare fern or orchid treasures I amass.

‘So may they, right as ever. You and I
Know them: at least you ’ll know them by-and-by.
You have the still, grey eyes, keenest of all
To puzzle out the blurred and blotted scrawl

An Old Ambassador's Pets

Written in wrinkle, twitch, glance, smile, grimace,
The manuscript they call the human face.

Obscure, I grant, but patience! you will win
To read our book whose binding is man's skin.

‘Now for my pets; but first this wicker flask—
Eau-de-cologne—you'll want it, for they task
The nerves of smell a trifle, though they hail
From islands where the poet's spicy gale
Flags around headlands where the night is warm
And the air heavy with the nutmeg's balm.

‘I turn the key. But stay; a moment's glance.
'Gad, what a sunset! See that clear expanse
Of palest green under the arch of cloud
That from the zenith downward creeps, a shroud
Sable to wrap the dying glory. Far,
Ay, leagues away beyond the leaden bar,
White mountains gleam, and sleeps the happy
west,
Recalling dreams of islands of the blest,

An Old Ambassador's Pets

That far and happy lie. And nothing breaks
That shining sea but splash of golden flakes,
And one red pillar bent athwart the heaven,
A whirl of crimson smoke in splendour driven.

‘Pass in. A quiet greeting ; that is best.
No howling, barking creatures to detest,
But warm luxurious silence. One light hiss
Stirs it alone, soft as a maiden's kiss.
That is my Mexican wild beauty ; see,
Fresh from the wilderness our newest, she
Is scarcely tolerant of strangers yet.
What form, what colour ! Hoops of blood and jet,
Thin swanlike neck in hue a ruby-red
Lifting that dainty triangle her head.
Mark how the eyes, twin diamonds, take fire !
But for that fragile screen of glass and wire
Your limbs, my friend, were stiff within the hour,
So travellers tell. I have not tried her power.
Were these good classic days, now, one might save
For such a use some cheap barbarian slave

An Old Ambassador's Pets

And watch her poison chill his blood to jelly.
See, Frank, the burning orange of the belly.
What jewelled flash of feather, neck, or wing
Could for an instant match this lovely thing ?
The humming-bird ? I've watched them by the
hour

Flit in the sunshine over leaf and flower,
The tiny gems, and seen their pretty ways,
Whirring and skimming in the tropic blaze.
Flowers with wings. But then their weakness such,
Shot down with dust and murdered with a touch.
Those little flying blossoms nectar-fed
Are feeble toys compared to yonder head
That can and will strike prey and foemen down,
Linking death-power with beauty. Yet you frown
Upon my choosing of this deadly snake
Before a harmless bird. At this you quake :
At that you 'd smile. A human dread this stirred ;
While you could patronise the helpless bird
Whose life awaits your whim to be or end.
I like what forces my respect, my friend.

An Old Ambassador's Pets

So snakes may well attract me, ay, and you,
Set as you are to study through and through
Beings as sinuous but clumsier far,
As full of venom as these reptiles are,
Only less swift, effectual, and sure.

‘Women may fascinate, but as they lure
We see the process, watch the way they take.
But who has probed the secret of the snake,
Or bared its fell attraction for its prey?
Most disbelieve the story. So they may.
They only know it who have felt, and these
Seldom tell tales.

‘And then for royal ease
And graceful, masterful, voluptuous strength
Match me the curves of yonder python's length!
Where is the athlete rash enough to dare
A battle with that fearful wrestler there,
Lazily loosening a languid fold,
Bathed in the splendour of the waning gold

An Old Ambassador's Pets

Still pouring through the gateway? Great he lies,
As the Norse Saga's serpent, grim and wise,
Who in the house upon the lonely fell
Lay on the fatal treasure watching well,
Till Sigurd by the dwarf armed, rode to slay
The "worm" with blade enchanted.

‘By the way,
My first acquaintance with this fellow here
Is worth the telling. It went very near
To end my searchings into serpent lore.
The old East Indian friend who shipped him o'er,
Thanks to some postman's error, I surmise,
Sent me no note beforehand. In this wise,
Coiled in a wicker crate, huge, marked "with care,"
They brought him to the hall and left him there.
Alone and late I came and saw it; took
The something strange and foreign in its look;
Cut through the fastenings; threw aside the lid.
Out in a second half the monster slid
Agape with rage.

An Old Ambassador's Pets

One coil with cruel stress

Crushed my left arm until, I must confess,
I could have shrieked from very pain, though light
Weighed vulgar pain in that accursed plight.
Black, forky, flickering, from out its sheath
The tongue shot through the inward-pointing teeth;
Like a foul bird's the head drew back to peck,
—Horror!—at mine;—when, catching at the neck,
I held, and the death-grapple was begun.

Had he but met me 'neath his native sun
Free, fresh, or come to fullest strength as now,
Our wrestling bout had ended soon enow.
Those horrid lacerating fangs had stripped
My face of flesh, those mighty coils had gripped
Body and limb in their titanic clasp,
Crushing me like an eggshell in their grasp.
But he was drowsy in our northern chill,
Weakened by long confinement, and young still,
So I made shift one-armed to hold him back.
Ah! how it all comes clear again! The black

An Old Ambassador's Pets

And yellow skin distending, parted teeth,
Eyes white and glaring, hissing fetid breath.
Horrible ! Horrible ! I could not look,
And in a cold sweat closed my eyes and shook.
Fiercely the frantic creature desperate
Struggled to free his body from the crate,
But still with single hand—thank God, the right,—
Fighting for life, for life, I clutched him tight.
Had I but looked again, or spent a thought
Upon the horror of the thing I fought,
I must have reeled and sickened. Ay, the will,
The will 'twas saved me then (as it doth still,
And ever may, I trust). I bent both back
And will to it, shouting till my voice 'gan crack,
And yell on yell brought Andrew, John, and all,
Thinking of murder, rushing to the hall.
They tore him off. They might have tugged for
long,
But Andrew, snatching from the crate a thong,
Twisted, and slipped it o'er the writhing head :
“Don't kill the brute,” I gasped ; and fainted dead.’

A Dream

HARD on the passing of a winter's night,
Before the morning came a-cold and wet,
This was my dream, of such a rare delight
It cheers me yet.

Under a seaward-fronting castle wall,
In a green garden's ancient shade, apart
She sat, the love whose footstep's lightest fall
Aye thrilled my heart.

The breeze blew softly from the western sky,
The red-barred sky where late the sun was gold,
And, slowly sinking on the shore to die,
The sea-wave rolled.

A Dream

Turning from these she rose at my approach,
And stood to meet me very calm and pale,
Nor could my burst of pleading and reproach
One whit avail.

Nor when I spoke in hot, impassioned wise
Made she reply, but still with lowered head
Bent on the sea below her fixed eyes
And nothing said.

'Twas when I paused and stayed in mute despair
Her heart, God knows by what, was touched at
last.

She turned her face away with piteous air,
And sobs came fast.

All thought and sight seemed into dimness whirled,
Only I knew that through that tumult wild
The deepest, sweetest eyes in all the world
Upon me smiled.

* * * *

A Dream

Hark how, without, the winds of winter blow !
While ever rise between my love and me
The clear-cut mountain-ridges, white with snow,
And rolls the sea !

Gordon at Khartoum

WHITE face among dark faces,
White soul black hearts amid :
Afar within waste places,
A light that was not hid ;
Of hero-stuff unruly
In unheroic age,
Cursed, worshipped, weighed untruly,
Not for to-day to gauge.

A land he toiled in saving,
Its loss in death to be ;
He died, the free enslaving,
Who lived the slave to free.
By death unseen, uncertain,
He conquered certain fame ;
And fills behind fate's curtain
A grave without a name.

The Disappointed Swagger

A WIDEAWAKE without a band,
Extremely battered at the top,
Sheltered a face the hue of sand,
And tangled hair, a greasy crop :
A belt his corduroys embraced,
Whence hung a keen, worn knife for
dagger ;
With strips of flax his boots he laced,
The disappointed swagger.

Each colony he knew that shines
In good Victoria's diadem ;
Had crossed on foot a dozen lines
Of longitude ; had prayed—ahem !—

The Disappointed Swagger

When on some grey Australian waste
The bitter thirst had made him stagger,
Or station dogs had rudely chased
The disappointed swagger.

Adventures could he tell you,—one,
A sticking-up by famed Ned Kelly,
Who, finding cash in pocket none,
Tied up and beat him half to jelly.
I wot the scribe who late unrolled
The tale of Kor's dread Amahagger,
Had found his yarns a mine of gold,
That disappointed swagger.

He 'd hunted old-man kangaroos
In company with sable trackers,
Had fished for sharks from frail canoes,
Cruised after whales with wild Kanakas,
And, where the veldt with dust is clad,
Had galloped after buck and quagga—

The Disappointed Swagger

That is to say, he *said* he had,
That disappointed swagger.

He was exceeding weather-wise
(Dear-bought experience of the tramp),
Could scent afar the storm's surprise,
And prudent make him safe in camp.
But most the sunset loved to mark,—
Its beauties making him a lagger,
Postponed our seeing until dark
The disappointed swagger.

And, knowing much, he well was known,
By the police on terms familiar,
Whose 'In again?' in cheerful tone
Perchance had jarred a temper sillier.
But he, who knew their pleasant way,
At wit official was no nagger,
And 'How much *this* trip, Boss?' would say
The disappointed swagger.

The Disappointed Swagger

He could do anything, he swore,
 Could skin a sheep or back a buckler,
And asked for all his labour sore
 Only a pound a week and tucker.
Would take what came, nor shirk nor fret,
 Be 'brander,' 'rouseabout,' or 'dagger,'
Yet work he never seemed to get,
 The disappointed swagger.

He'd asked a feed from many a boss,
 And if, through stress of human badness,
The answer was profane or cross,
 Aye smiled with philosophic sadness,
Nor ever let refusal pain,
 But, model for a carpet-bagger,
No malice bore, and—asked again,
 A disappointed swagger.

At length in unexpected way
 Came for these smarts a cruel ointment :

The Disappointed Swagger

He found a job. Alack-a-day !

Ah, then indeed fell disappointment !

‘Then burst his mighty heart,’ before

In storm or sunshine ne’er a flagger.

He *went to work*, for evermore

A disappointed swagger.

A Confession of Cricket

I HAVE scored from good bowling and fast ;
I have taken the wicket—to slows ;
And long, long ago, in the past
By fielding to eminence rose.
I have stood when professionals fell ;
Have obtained an analysis—one,
But, alas ! the authorities tell
I was never a judge of a run.

I have bowled out a champion stout,
L.B.W. *Who said he hit it ?*
I once made a seven—run out—
From a shocking full pitch, I admit it.
I have practised at eve in the cold,
Have sweated at noon in the sun,
But, alack ! when my story is told,
It remains, I'm no judge of a run.

A Confession of Cricket

I have taken a chance in the slips,
And given a great many more,
Have splintered a bat into chips
(It was borrowed) in hitting a four.
I have 'pulled' a match out of the fire,—
Pray pardon the obvious pun,—
But this I could never acquire,
A notion of judging a run.

I pored over chapters of lore,
Grace, Lillywhite, Pycroft and Co. ;
I called till my throat became sore
With yelling of 'yes' and of 'no.'
But vain was the desperate call,
Like whoop of a furious Hun—
The verdict stands once and for all,
'A shocking bad judge of a run.'

When the last of the enemy's out,
And the first of our batsmen are in,

A Confession of Cricket

And critics assembled about

Decide we are going to win ;

When sages mete honour or blame,

There is none to dissent from it,—none

The censure that dooms me to shame,

‘He—he was no judge of a run!’

When Winter and Football conspire

To rage ; when the Summer is fled ;

When the turf is deep-trodden in mire ;

Then, late, when the house is abed,

They rise, as I sit by the fire,

The ghosts of brave comrades undone,

And, gibbering, hiss in their ire,

‘You—you were no judge of a run!’

Ye boys who attend to this tale,

Who yet have control of your fate,

Beware lest like me ye bewail,

When wailing is futile and late ;

A Confession of Cricket

Play crooked, pull, fumble, or miss,
Hard work and net practices shun,
Do *anything* rather than this,—
Be known as no judge of a run.

A Lay of Legislation

THE youth who to politics takes
With visions of ale and of cakes,
Of honour and glory
In national story,
Is apt to repent when he wakes
To find that a conscript at drill,
Or an elderly horse at a mill,
May be reckoned a king
Or a bird on the wing
When compared to the Man with a Bill.

The soldier and even the beast
Are cared for and valued at least,
And gain their remission
From work by admission

A Lay of Legislation

‘Enough is as good as a feast’;
But aye the political mill
Goes grinding implacably still;
 And aye to its clack,
 With a whip at his back,
He trudges—the Man with a Bill.

Yea, of objects deserving of pity,
Meet subjects for lachrymose ditty,
 Who wrangle or yawn
 From noon until dawn
In caucus, debate, or committee,
Of all chosen victims of ill,
All targets for spite and ill-will,
 The sorriest sight,
 The unluckiest wight,
Is the member who fathers a Bill.

He must recklessly seek to hob-nob; he
Must hearken to men with a hobby,

A Lay of Legislation

Like prisoner barred,
Or a sentry on guard,
Pacing backward and forward the
lobby ;
Must scan, apprehensive of ill,
Foes' faces with sickening thrill,
Forgetting old ruses,
Forgiving old bruises,
Endured for the sake of his Bill.

He deprecates heated debate
When gentlemen gentlemen slate
Or skirmishing factious,
Or quarrelling fractious,
Subversive of order and state ;
Would fain party violence still,
And calm animosities shrill,
Considers stonewalling
A practice appalling—
It is to a Man with a Bill.

A Lay of Legislation

He must humble himself and be meek ;
Be patient, nor venture to sneak
 From his seat to the door,
 When some earnest old bore
Has solemnly risen to speak ;
But listen all night and sit still,
Though draughty the Chamber and chill,
 And then after that,
 With a compliment pat,
He may capture a vote for his Bill.

He has forty-four clauses to draw,
And fiends who will pry for a flaw ;
 Who belong to the Bar,
 And in consequence are,
Or think themselves, learned in law ;
Who, thirsting his life-blood to spill,
Will lie in their ambush until,
 Like sheep to the shearer,
 Or trout to the spearer,
Comes helpless the Man with the Bill.

A Lay of Legislation

For, lo ! he is up in his place,
To tell them the facts of the case ;
 Mild, plausible, brief,
 He expresses belief
That its merits appear on its face.
No measure concocted with skill,
To filch from the Colony's till ;
 'Twill foster the forces
 Of local resources,
And teach self-reliance—*this* Bill.

Alas ! for his Castle in Spain,
His session of labour in vain,
 Christian-like charity,
 Humble hilarity,
Charming and jocular vein !
As hounds that rush in at a ' kill,'
To worry their fox with a will,
 A murderous rout,
 With a whoop and a shout,
Pounce, swoop, and descend on the Bill !

A Lay of Legislation

They prove it a measure malign,

A job of atrocious design.

He furtively peers,

With a buzz in his ears,

At the enemy springing the mine,

The notes from whose venomous quill,

A pile half as big as a hill,—

Digressions in stages,

Quotations, whole pages,—

Mean talk against time and the Bill.

He watches the clock on the wall,

The seconds and minutes that crawl.

He watches the clock,

While voices that mock,

Rise, echo, and murmur and fall.

Like martyr of old on the grill,

By wicked inquisitor's will;

In anguish perspiring,

Red-hot, half-expiring,

They torture the Man with the Bill.

A Lay of Legislation

Then even when fortune affords
The Bill an escape from their swords,
 'Tis a hundred to one,
 When its history's done,
It is slain in cold blood by the 'Lords,'
Who, only too ready to swill
Of slaughter their murderous fill,
 As a matter of course
 Without any remorse
Give the Happy Despatch to his Bill.

Perched up in their gallery high,
He groans as they doom it to die,
 As they do it to death
 In the Council beneath,
Heart-broken he mutters 'Good-bye !'
For, ever their bitterest pill,
Compounded with cruelest skill,
 Their deadliest chalice
 Of mocking and malice,
They keep for the Man with a Bill.

A Deserted School Bathing- Place¹

STILL is the air, but chill and keen
The winter's lightest breath between
 The boughs, whence float awry
The yellow willow leaves, and fall
To fleck the sullen river's pall,
 Reflection of the sky.

And all this pallid, solemn state
Thine absence makes more desolate,
 Great 'Kid's Hole !' where art thou ?
Our citadel and nursing-place,
The cradle of a mightier race
 That swims the Avon now.

¹ On the Avon, at Christ's College Grammar School, New Zealand.

A Deserted School Bathing-Place

None can thy ruins sit amid—
As in dead Carthage Marius did,—
Gone is thy sacred wood.
And since, by sitting so, I'd get
Extremely cold and very wet,
I wouldn't if I could.

Here, where in silence leaves bestrew
This current sad whose sombre hue
Matches thy sorry cheer,
We young barbarians all at play
Fleeted the golden hours away
With merry splash and jeer.

There is the brink, where first I know
I trembled twenty years ago,
A very little 'kid,'
Till an unpleasant voice above
Bawled, 'Hurry up, or else, by Jove,
I'll chuck you in,'—he did.

A Deserted School Bathing-Place

Then was no Palace of Delight
To swim in, such as on the height
Our gay descendants share.
But ours were fires, and rambling pranks,
And battles from opposing banks,
Ere rowing parties were.

Young bathers now clean towels bear,
Soon in a looking-glass with care
Their neckties they 'll arrange.
We let the sun imbrown our hide,
Or dried it on a coat's inside,
Or handkerchief, for change.

How would he stare, what would he say,
The trim Collegian of to-day,
How would he bless his stars,
At us his savage ancestors,
In war-paint dancing on the shores,
Bedaubed in muddy bars?

A Deserted School Bathing-Place

Where's the old punt? Deceiving craft,
She let in water fore and aft

Till she was all leak.

O 'fatal and perfidious bark,'
Whose gallant crews destruction dark
Put daily out to seek!

Where are the 'louts,' those jeering tones
They flung us o'er the stream, with stones!—

They threw exceeding straight.

Now in a good ear-splitting way
Does *College!* scare the louts to-day
Where boys do congregate?

Ah, those old days still on the wing
With hope of what the years would bring

That could not come too fast!

Hath aught, if full account we take,
Come with the rapid years to make

The present match the past?

A Deserted School Bathing-Place

Good-bye ! The better by a thought

I go, with cheerier fancy fraught,

Though the leaves that fly,

And wan, like shivering spectres fall,

While still the sullen water's pall

Reflects the sullen sky.

The Old College Boy

(A Ballade of Bygone Days)

HE spelt in a style of his own,
And grammar was one of his woes ;
Yea, the things that to him were unknown
Might an encyclopædia compose.
Fair Science might frown if she chose,
Or smile,—she was none of his joy ;
But he made it unpleasant for slows,
—’Twas the way of the Old College Boy.

Through the Classics, misguided by Bohn,
He laboured with dolorous throes.
His French should be heard to be known :
Its fame passeth Stratford-at-Bow’s.
Old Arithmetic papers disclose

The Old College Boy

He was shaky at Weights, such as Troy ;
But in Battles he weighed not the foes.
—'Twas the way of the Old College Boy.

His limbs had their raiment outgrown,
In a Gordian knot were his bows ;
No 'swallow-tail' dared he to own,
His shoes were not Nicholl and Co.'s ;
Young damosels, fresh as a rose,
He regarded with diffidence coy ;
Made for kicking not dancing *his* toes,
—'Twas the way of the Old College Boy.

With handkerchief girded for zone,
In a rig that might frighten the crows,
In racing ere training was known,
He puffed like a porpoise that blows.
'Mid soldiers in murderous rows
He never stood armed to destroy,
But his fist found his enemy's nose,
—'Twas the way of the Old College Boy.

The Old College Boy

When Summer, with happiness flown,
Brought holidays unto their close,
On many a mountain-top lone
Coincided a melting of snows.¹
Wild floods in the river-beds rose,
And, much to each scholar's annoy,
Barred the way to our city that goes,
—'Twas the way of the Old College Boy.

(L'ENVOI to ANDREW LANG)

My title should own, I suppose,
How much I your model employ ;
But never his crib to expose
Was the way of the Old College Boy.

¹ Since the institution of bridges, this phenomenon has, I believe, ceased, and the rivers take no note of the terms observed at Christ's College Grammar School.

MR. GRANT RICHARDS'S NEW BOOKS IN BELLES LETTRES

Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám: a Paraphrase from several literal translations. By RICHARD LE GALLIENNE. From the press of Messrs. T. and A. Constable. Long Fcap. 8vo. Parchment. 5s.

THE NEW ANTHOLOGIES

The Flower of the Mind: a Choice among the best Poems. Made by ALICE MEYNELL. With Cover Design by LAURENCE HOUSMAN. Crown 8vo. Buckram. 6s.

A Book of Verses for Children. Compiled by EDWARD VERRALL LUCAS. With Cover, End-papers, and Title-page designed in colours by F. D. BEDFORD. Crown 8vo. Cloth. 6s.

The Inferno of Dante translated into English Verse. By EUGENE LEE-HAMILTON, Author of 'Sonnets of the Wingless Hours,' etc. Fcap. 8vo. Buckram. 5s. net.

A Peakland Faggot: Tales told of Milton Folk. By R. MURRAY GILCHRIST, Author of 'The Stone Dragon,' etc. Fcap. 8vo. Cloth. 2s. 6d. The First Volume of the Sylvan Series.

Limbo, and Other Essays. By VERNON LEE, Author of 'Althea,' 'Euphorion,' etc. With Frontispiece. Fcap. 8vo. Buckram. 5s. net.

ENGLISH PORTRAITS

A SERIES OF LITHOGRAPHED DRAWINGS

By WILL ROTHENSTEIN

WITH SHORT TEXTS BY VARIOUS HANDS

*In twelve parts, each in a wrapper designed by the artist,
2s. 6d. each, net.*

Part I. SIR FREDERICK POLLOCK, Bart., and Mr. THOMAS
HARDY.

II. SIR F. SEYMOUR HADEN, F.R.C.S., and Mr.
WILLIAM ARCHER.

III. Right Rev. Dr. CREIGHTON and MARCHIONESS OF
GRANBY.

IV. Mr. W. E. H. LECKY, P.C., M.P., and Mr. JOHN
SARGENT, R.A.

V. Mr. W. E. HENLEY and Mr. A. W. PINERO.

VI. Miss ELLEN TERRY and Mr. SIDNEY COLVIN.

VII. Professor A. LEGROS and Mr. ROBERT BRIDGES.

VIII. Professor CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD and Mr.
GEORGE BERNARD SHAW.

IX. Mrs. MEYNELL, Mr. CHARLES RICKETTS, and
Mr. CHARLES HAZELWOOD SHANNON.

X. Mr. HOLMAN HUNT and Mr. GRANT ALLEN.

The subjects of the remaining portraits will be announced shortly.

GRANT RICHARDS: 9 HENRIETTA ST., COVENT GARDEN.

**University of Toronto
Library**

**DO NOT
REMOVE
THE
CARD
FROM
THIS
POCKET**

**Acme Library Card Pocket
Under Pat. "Ref. Index File"
Made by LIBRARY BUREAU**

